

# **MAINE SERVICE CENTERS COALITION**

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## **Testimony of the Maine Service Centers Coalition LD 2226, An Act to Amend the Essential Programs and Services School Funding Formula**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, the Maine Service Centers Coalition is submitting testimony in support of LD 2226, An Act to Amend the Essential Programs and Services School Funding Formula.

The Maine Service Centers Coalition, comprised of 27 towns and cities across the state, articulates the importance of healthy and thriving service center communities, advocates for public policy that supports and contributes to the economic and social viability of our communities, and collaborates with municipal officials, legislators, state agencies and nonprofits to pursue quality of life for all who live and work in our state.

Young people are Maine's greatest asset. It is up to all of us to provide them with the best education possible so they can become thriving members of our communities and our state. LD 2226 takes important steps toward improving Maine's school funding system, ensuring resources are distributed more fairly to districts and, importantly, to students who need them most.

The bill updates the outdated Essential Programs and Services (EPS) funding formula that has not been substantially revised in over a decade. It updates parts of the formula, including the regional adjustment, so funding better reflects current costs of living and labor conditions across the state.

LD 2226 provides additional support for economically disadvantaged students, directing resources toward districts with the greatest need. And, it addresses the transportation funding shortage that has been underfunded in recent years.

This bill will correct long-standing funding gaps and create a fairer measure of community resources, giving a more accurate picture of a municipality's ability to support its schools. It will move Maine toward a more current, equitable, and realistic funding system that will help strengthen our public schools.

For these reasons, the Maine Service Centers Coalition supports this important legislation.

Thank you for your time and attention.